

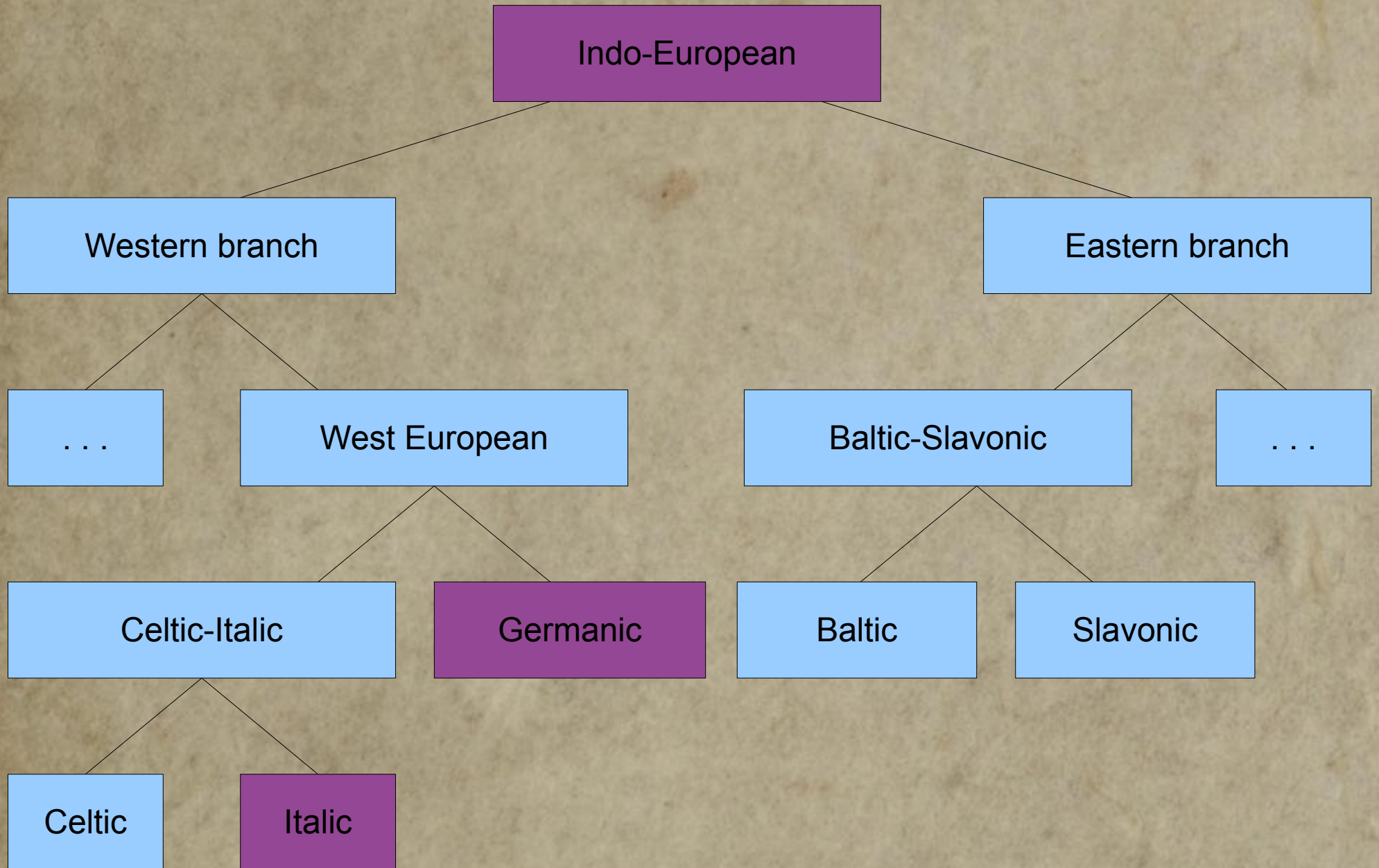
**Old English:  
Historical Introduction  
&  
Language Preliminaries**

ENG240Y Old English / Mon 13 Sep 2010

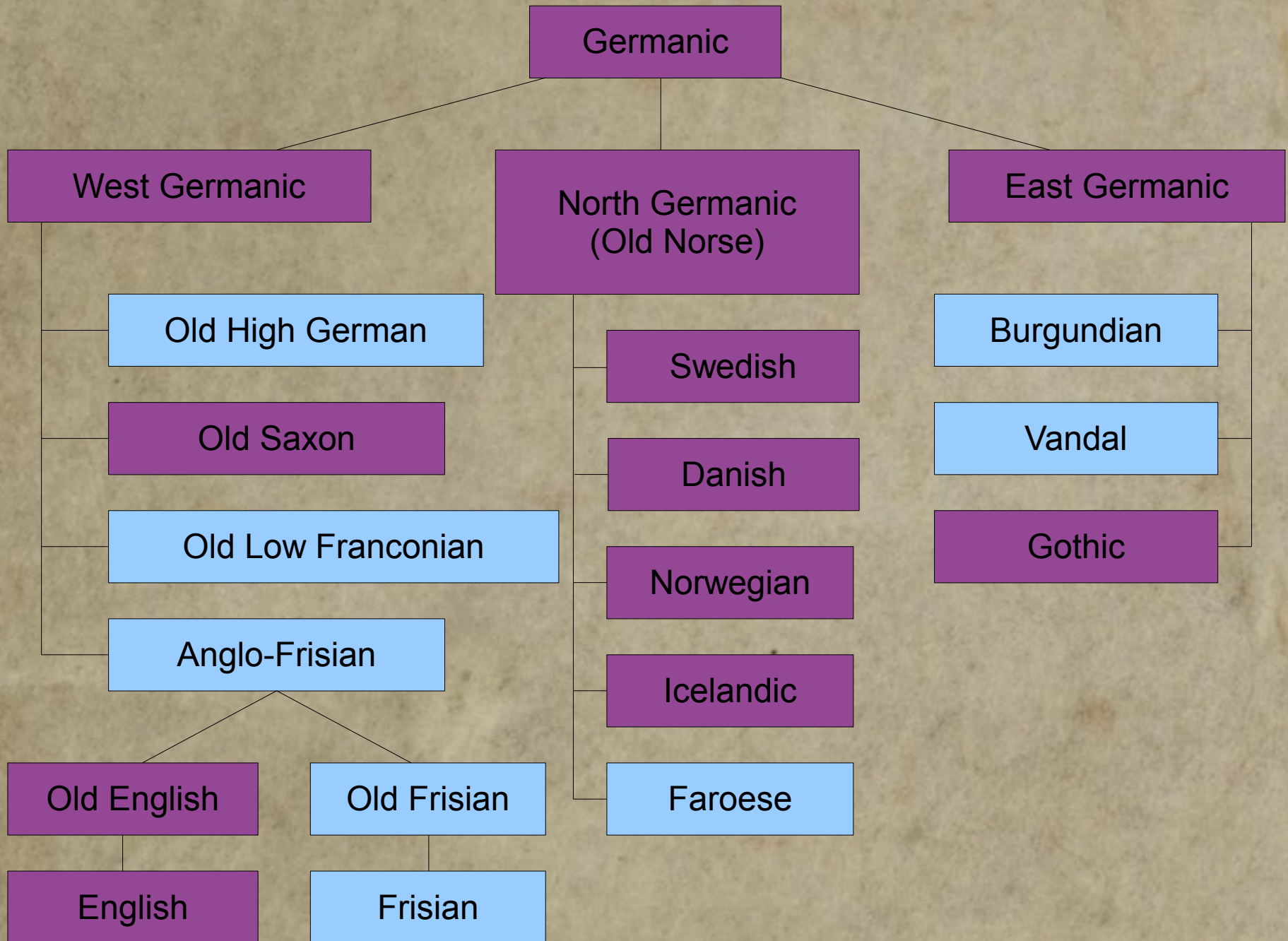
# Comparison of languages

Latin	Sanskrit	Gothic	German	English
pater	pitar-	fadar	Vater	father
pellis	*	fill	Fell	fell
hortus	grha	gards	Garten	garden
duo	dvau	twai	zwei	two
decem	dasa	taihun	zehn	ten

# The Indo-European Languages



# The Germanic Languages



# Settlement



# The alphabet

A	Æ	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	R	S	T	Þ	Ð	U	ƿ	Y
a	æ	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m	n	o	p	r	s	t	þ	ð	u	ƿ	y

grapheme	name	pronunciation	example
Þ / þ	<i>thorn</i>	<b>thick</b> or <b>bathe</b>	<i>þancian</i> ‘thank’
Ð / ð	<i>eth</i>	<b>thick</b> or <b>bathe</b>	<i>forðon</i> ‘therefore’
Æ / æ	<i>ash</i>	<b>axe</b>	<i>wæstm</i> ‘fruit’
ƿ / ƿ	<i>wynn</i>	<b>work</b>	<i>pine</i> ‘friend’

Tip: access *thorn*, *eth*, and *ash* on your computer by setting Icelandic as an alternate input language.

# Nominal structure

- **analytical language:** relies on prepositions and word order to convey syntactic structure
- **synthetic language:** relies on word inflections

Se þēow	sēceð	þone cyning
þone cyning	sēceð	se þēow

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Se cyning	sēceð	þone þēow

Servus	regem	quaerit
Regem	servus	quaerit
Rex	servum	quaerit

(Cf. MnE personal pronouns)



# Verb structure

- **weak verbs:** form preterite/past ptc. using dental suffix  
MnE walk > walk<sup>ed</sup> > walk<sup>ed</sup>  
OE dēman > dēm<sup>de</sup> > dēm<sup>ed</sup> ('judge', cf. *deem*)
- **strong verbs:** form preterite by vowel gradation  
MnE sing > sang > sung  
OE singan > sang > sungon > sung<sup>en</sup>  
faran > fōr > fōron > far<sup>en</sup>

# Old English period

449 traditional invasion Angles, Saxons, Jutes

1066 Norman Conquest

spoken Old English : c. 500–1100

literary period : c. 600–1100